
BACKGROUND

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Ministry of Health

CONNECTING B.C. COMMUNITIES

British Columbia is the most connected jurisdiction in North America.

- 74 per cent of households are connected to the Internet.
- 64 per cent of households have a high speed or broadband connection.

Telecommunications and Internet links do more than enhance personal communication, they also:

- Aid in the delivery of new educational, health care and other services;
- Encourage revitalization of rural communities by allowing the people living in those communities to participate in the global knowledge based economy.

Increasingly, these services must be provided over high speed connections to operate effectively and have real impact.

In 2001, the government of B.C. formed the Premier's Technology Council (PTC) to examine technology-related issues facing British Columbians. The PTC identified 366 communities that were a priority for high speed internet access. For more information about the PTC, visit the Province of British Columbia's website (www.gov.bc.ca) and follow links to the PTC website.

Already, 89 per cent of B.C.'s citizens live in communities that are connected to high-speed internet, yet citizens in 151 communities in British Columbia are without. 76 of these remote communities are First Nations or communities in proximity to First Nations. These unconnected communities are small and there is little business rationale for small commercial carriers to make the investment required to bring high-speed services to these communities.

In 2003 the government formed Network BC, with a mandate to bridge the digital divide and connect B.C. communities by leveraging the telecommunications purchase by the public sector to expand affordable high speed Internet services to rural and remote communities.

TELUS has worked closely with Network BC to help fulfill that mandate.

For more information on Network BC, visit www.network.gov.bc.ca.

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